

In the News

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

John A. Wilson Building
1350 Penn. Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20004
Phone: (202) 727-2980
Fax: (202) 727-6561
<http://dc.gov>

Message from the Mayor

What a storm it was - one that will undoubtedly live on in infamy in our city.

Hurricane Isabel dealt quite a blow to the District of Columbia. But our government, citizens and businesses fought back with a vengeance. We came together in great numbers. We pitched in to help our neighbors. And we triumphed over a storm massive enough to cause extensive damage in several states and our city.

As we continue to pick up the pieces from Isabel's wrath, I am extremely proud of our city's emergency personnel — including fire, police and Emergency Management Agency officials, led by DCEMA Director Peter LaPorte.

My thanks go out to all the people in the field delivering food, cutting up trees, directing traffic, picking up debris, to the people at the Emergency Operations Center who staffed the Center day in and day out. They rolled up their sleeves, pounded the pavement and helped show all of us what it means to be a "public servant."

I'd also like to thank the hundreds of volunteers who helped us through the storm. They drove seniors to doctors' appointments. They handed out food. They helped deliver ice, and they looked out for their neighbors. The grit and dedication these volunteers demonstrated during Isabel's aftermath should serve as an inspiration to all of us.

As many of you know, we faced myriad challenges in the wake of the storm. On Sunday, September 21, we reported that 190 intersections did not have working traffic signals. Nearly 100,000 of our city's residents spent days without power, and some without hot water. During our darkest hours, many of our citizens sat frustrated and confounded over how Isabel could reap so much damage.

Despite the challenges, we rose up. We helped provide hundreds of thousands of pounds of ice to our city's residents. We provided thousands of meals to the needy during the emergency. As always, emergencies such as Hurricane Isabel serve as a learning experience for the District of Columbia government. I feel we performed extremely well — but there's always room for improvement in the business of emergency management.

Citizens learned from this experience as well. For example, most people now know why, if lights at a traffic intersection fail, the intersection should be treated as a four-way stop.

On Saturday, September 20, President Bush authorized the use of federal disaster funds and emergency resources for the District to help families and businesses recover from the effects of Isabel. The declaration covers damage to private property from Isabel beginning on September 18. Affected residents and business owners in the District may begin the disaster application process by calling (800) 621-FEMA or (800) 462-7585 (TTY) for the hearing and speech impaired. The toll-free numbers are available from 7 a.m. - midnight, seven days a week, until further notice.



AGENCY WEBSITES

[Office of Tax and Revenue](#)

[Department of Parks and Recreation](#)

[Department of Employment Services](#)

[Metropolitan Police Department](#)

[Office of Boards and Commissions](#)

[Commission on the Arts and Humanities](#)

Mayor Helps Announce Plans for Pennsylvania Avenue

Few places in our magnificent city are more beautiful than Pennsylvania Avenue. On September 8, I joined First Lady Laura Bush in announcing a plan to spruce up Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House. I believe this plan will not only improve this stretch of Pennsylvania Avenue — it will make it more spectacular than ever.

It was a great honor to join First Lady Laura Bush to announce such a wonderful plan to beautify Pennsylvania Avenue. The White House is Washington's premier tourist attraction. It is a symbol of democracy and freedom. In many ways, the situation on Pennsylvania Avenue has come to symbolize the ongoing struggle that we all face in our efforts to balance national security needs in a dangerous world with our desire to maintain the image of a free and open society.

Pennsylvania Avenue links the Capitol and the White House. It's the path for the Inaugural Parade when we renew our democracy every four years. We are proud that the John A. Wilson Building, our city hall, sits right on the Avenue at 13½ Street.

And while we still hope that someday the closed portion of Pennsylvania Avenue will be open once again to vehicular traffic, we support this project to eliminate the current visual blight in front of the White House and to beautify the area both on and adjacent to the roadway. If the road is going to be closed for now, let's at least make it look nice.

The District's Department of Transportation has been involved in all stages of developing the President's Park plan, and I appreciate the lead role that the National Capital Planning Commission played along with the National Park Service and the Federal Highway Administration.

The District will retain jurisdiction over the right-of-way and the federal government will take over maintenance. The District will also keep responsibility for public space permits for any reconstruction activity in the right-of-way while public use permits for demonstrations or other public events will be a federal responsibility.

I am pleased that the plan allows for the proposed Downtown Circulator to cross through the Pennsylvania Avenue right-of-way, thereby re-establishing a vehicular traffic use of the right-of-way. This will be a major improvement in east-west access. The new plan also improves east-west bicycle and pedestrian circulation across the downtown. I appreciate all the efforts of the parties who have worked so hard on this project. I look forward to watching the construction and planting in the months to come.

Mayor Cuts Ribbon on Emery Recreation Center Playground

On September 13, I joined a host of local officials to cut the ribbon on the spectacular new Emery Playground site at Georgia Avenue and Madison Street in Northwest. This \$6.2 million renovation is another example of how our Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) is working overtime to improve our city, namely for our youngsters.

The Emery Recreation Center subproject was initially authorized and funded as part of the District of Columbia Government's Capital Improvement Plan and Fiscal Year 2000 Capital Budget. This exciting effort makes way for a new two-story recreation facility with an indoor gymnasium.

The new state-of-the-art facility contains more than 28,000 square feet of space, several offices, meeting and multi-purpose rooms, kitchen facilities, a hardwood floor gymnasium, and other amenities. The community has remained steadfast in its commitment to this effort, and I'd like to commend everyone involved in making the center possible.

This is another example of our city's commitment to support young people and to help them to reach their full potential. This facility offers enhanced recreation opportunities for our children and a resource for parents and guardians of this community.

The new recreation center, gymnasium, and playground are welcome assets to this community and our city. They're all symbols of the rebirth and growth of our neighborhoods throughout the city. We're making sure our young people and all of our citizens have a place to share with each other. I believe the strength and the hope of our young people depends on citizens — individual and corporate — coming together around a vision, as they have done at Emery.

I am committed to our parks and playgrounds, and I am encouraging innovative approaches to maintaining our facilities. The staff at DPR continues to work to create a balanced offering of activities and programs in the District to ensure that our young people are prepared for the world.



City Living, Press Club 5K Race Forwards Mayor's Message

On September 6, I had the pleasure of kicking off the 6th annual National Press Club 5K Race in Northwest. Sponsored in part by "city living, dc style!" the event benefited the Ellen Masin Persina Scholarship for aspiring minority journalists. I know the media in our city like to kick me around sometimes — but I'll always be there to help them when they need me.

More than 500 runners participated in this year's event. They traveled from F Street towards the U.S. Capitol, and then looped back. The weather was perfect for running. The sun was out, and there was a light breeze. I congratulate everyone who successfully completed the race. Their dedication and enthusiasm is truly inspiring. Thanks to the leadership of the National Press Club, including Tammy Lytle, the race went off without a hitch.

As many of our citizens know, I am committed to bringing 100,000 new residents to the District. To meet this goal, we have launched a brand-new marketing campaign — "city living, dc style!" Targeting commuters, current renters, young professionals and empty-nesters, city living brings together all the reasons to move to D.C. — housing for all incomes, recreation for all ages, and entertainment for every taste.

Throughout the month of September, "city living, dc style!" is focusing on all the unique recreation opportunities in the District, similar to the National Press Club's 5K race. This city, from downtown, to neighborhoods, is built for being outdoors. We have 50 miles of hiking and walking trails (and more to come soon along the Anacostia River), and great public golf courses and water sports along both the Anacostia and Potomac rivers. Similarly, our public parks, including Rock Creek Park, are some of the most magnificent in the world. And if this isn't impressive enough, we are the No. 1 walking city in the United States, according to the American Podiatric Medical Association. District residents, past, present and future, should take great pride in this.

It is my hope that city living will tell people who don't live in the District all the reasons that they should, and tell people who do live in D.C. that there is more to do than you know. You can expect to see "city living, dc style!" materials while out and about on the Metro, listening to the radio, relaxing in front of the television, or while exploring the World Wide Web.

I want to encourage all of our readers to come out to the "city living, dc style!" expo on October 24 to October 26, 2003, in our new Washington Convention Center. At the expo, visitors can learn about new housing, get a home loan, learn to build a deck for those endless sunny days, and get everything you need but a set of keys. Please visit city living online at www.citylivingdc.com for more information.

Kennedy Institute Disability Award

On September 6, I visited the Kennedy Institute in Northeast to receive a certificate of appreciation plaque for our city's support of citizens with developmental disabilities. The theme of the event was "Celebrating Our Caring Community." It was a community celebration designed to teach citizens about the services for children and adults with developmental disabilities in the Archdiocese of Washington. Individuals with developmental disabilities are valued members of our community and must be included in all aspects of our society. They are productive citizens that need our support and advocacy. I believe our government has to work for everyone — particularly our most vulnerable residents.

The Kennedy Institute's community celebration helped citizens learn more about the center's services for children and adults. Attending the event was His Eminence Theodore Cardinal McCarrick; Montgomery County Councilmember George Leventhal, Chair of Health and Human Services Committee and Ron Jackson, and Michael Ward, president and CEO of the Kennedy Institute.

Many children, adults, and families with developmental disabilities require critical services throughout their lives, and communities require assistance to know how to include people with developmental disabilities.

In 1959, the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur founded the Kennedy Institute as a small, special education school for 60 children with developmental disabilities. Now, the Lt. Joseph P. Kennedy Institute is a social concerns agency of the Archdiocese of Washington, which brings about positive changes in the lives of more than 500 children, adults, and families with developmental disabilities each day.

The goal of the Kennedy Institute is not simply to care for developmentally disabled individuals, but to support them as they attain self-determination, integration, productivity and inclusion. That is why we will continue to put money in programs such as education and literacy.

In support of the work of the Kennedy Institute, I proclaimed September 6, 2003, as "Lt. Joseph P. Kennedy Institute Day" in Washington, D.C., and called upon all the residents of this great city to join me in supporting this organization as it continues to enhance the quality of life of others.

You can learn more about the Lieutenant Joseph P. Kennedy Institute by visiting the website at www.kennedyinstitute.org.



The Promise of School Choice

As I've said on several occasions in the past few months, I am deeply committed to making school choice a reality in the District of Columbia. At the same time, I am disappointed at the abundance of misinformation about our city's efforts. I remain convinced that the School Improvement Initiative is in the best interest of our children and our city's parents.

I want to make clear that school choice is not being imposed on the District. I welcome it, and Peggy Cooper Cafritz, our School Board president, welcomes it. School choice funds are not going to fly-by-night schools, but only to those already licensed and regulated by the District.

The School Improvement Initiative is an important complement to what we are already doing in the District of Columbia Public Schools.

I am dedicated to making the improvements we need for the District of Columbia Public Schools. But thousands of our children can't wait until we do everything we need to do to make the changes. Our children need help right now. Many parents in our city have already found alternatives within DCPS (such as Duke Ellington School of the Arts in Northwest) and in our thriving public charter school system. I'm proud to say that in the District, we have a robust public charter system that is among the largest of any city in the United States. Still, the demand has not been met.

We want to meet parental demand for better school choice in the District of Columbia. I have been working diligently within my administration, and with the school board, the federal government, and Councilmember Kevin Chavous (Ward 7) to help develop a choice program. I am confident that such a program will benefit the children of the District.

Under the plan presently before Congress, the federal government would provide unprecedented funding to all of our schools — public, and public charter, and to parents interested in private school options. I'm convinced this plan will lift up all of our children.

While some may disagree with me on my support of private school scholarships, I believe that as part of this comprehensive package such a program would help expand and improve the quality of educational options available to District parents and children.



Mayor Williams joined Senators Frist and Feinstein on Capitol Hill to express support for the District's school choice program as the Senate began its debate.

Mayor's Week In Review

Mayor Hits Radio One Airwaves

On Sept. 13, I hosted my monthly radio show on Radio One's "WMMJ"—102.3 FM for two hours. Comedian and actress Wanda Sykes appeared as my surprise caller.

Mayor Speaks at Recreation Center in Northwest

On Sept. 13, I delivered remarks, cut a ribbon, and took a tour of the new "state of the art" Emery Recreation Center, gymnasium, and playground in Northwest.

Mayor Appears at Federal City Council

On Sept. 15, I appeared as the featured speaker at the Federal City Council's Annual Meeting.

Mayor Appears at Chamber Legislative Session

On Sept. 16, I delivered brief remarks at the annual legislative session for the Chamber of Commerce — an event to honor the District of Columbia Council.

Mayor Speaks at the City Museum

On Sept. 16, I delivered remarks at a reception to mark the opening of the community galleries at the new City Museum.

Mayor Tours Ward 5 With NS Team

On Sept. 17, I met with our Ward 5 Neighborhood Services team to take a tour of various sites in the ward. We took a tour of the ward, had lunch, and discussed current issues facing the neighborhoods in Ward 5.

Mayor Holds Multiple Briefings for Isabel

On Sept. 18, 19, 20 and 21, I held several press briefings to discuss the challenges the District faced in the wake of Hurricane Isabel.



District Activities



Mayor Williams and Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton were among those on hand for the First Day of Issue Ceremony at the City Museum for the new DC stamp on September 23.



Mayor Williams greets residents at a ribbon cutting ceremony at the opening of the new Dupont Commons community.

Community News

- [Mayor Williams Declares State of Emergency for District of Columbia](#)
- [Mayor Announces Emergency Food Stamp Program](#)
- [Transformation Schools to Receive City Services](#)

[View all News Releases](#)

Upcoming Events

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| 9/29 | Mayor's Latino Cultural Fair and Town Hall
Cultural Fair 5 pm - 6:30 pm
Mayor's Town Hall 6:30 pm - 8 pm
Cardozo High School
1300 Clifton Street, NW |
| 10/11 | Household Hazardous Waste Day
9 am - 3 pm
Carter Barron Amphitheater
For more information, visit www.dpw.dc.gov |
| 10/11 to 10/13 | Taste of DC
11 am - 6:30 pm
Pennsylvania Avenue, NW between 7th and 14th Streets
For more information, call (202) 537-6200 |
| 10/18 | CakeLove Cakewalk
9 am - 2 pm
15th Street NW between U and T Streets
For more information, call (202) 320-9922 |

[View the Mayor's daily schedule](#)

